

Appl. No. 10/082,416
Amdt. dated 12/19/2005
Reply to Office Action of 09/21/2005

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 32 are pending. In this Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1 - 4, 9 - 12, 17 - 20 and 25 - 28 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Monroe et al. Claims 5 - 8, 13 - 16, 21 - 24 and 29 - 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Monroe et al. in view of Anand et al.

In reviewing the Specification, Applicants noticed a minor typographical/grammatical error that has been corrected. For the reasons stated more fully below, Applicants submit that the claims are allowable over the applied references. Hence, reconsideration, allowance and passage to issue are respectfully requested.

As mentioned in the SPECIFICATION, dynamic addressing simplifies network administration because software keeps track of IP addresses rather than requiring an administrator to manage the task. This means that a new computer system can be added to a network without having to manually assign a unique IP address to the new system.

To assign IP addresses to client systems, a DHCP server uses a configuration file in which is stored a range of IP addresses for each sub-network. This configuration file is used to build a database that is consulted whenever a DHCP server has to assign an IP address to a client system. Associated with each range of IP addresses are options for at least a router and a domain name server. Thus, when the DHCP server assigns an IP address from a particular range of addresses to a client system, it also specifies which router and domain name server the client

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should use. Hence, depending on the number of active client systems in a sub-network, there may be times when a particular router and/or domain name server is overburdened with network traffic. When that occurs, the system administrator may want to load-balance the network by associating a new router and/or domain name server with a range of IP addresses. To do so, the system administrator has to modify the configuration file.

As is well known in the industry, each time a configuration file is modified, the DHCP server has to be refreshed. Obviously, while the DHCP server is being refreshed, it cannot respond to any IP address requests. In addition, while client systems that have requested IP addresses after the DHCP server has been refreshed will use an unburdened router and/or domain name server, the ones that were assigned IP addresses before the DHCP server was refreshed will continue to use the overburdened router and/or domain name server. Therefore, a method for dynamically load-balancing routers and/or domain name servers in a network is greatly needed. The present invention provides such a method.

According to the teachings of the invention, dynamic host configuration protocol (DHCP) options stored in a configuration file on a computer system are periodically updated automatically. This periodic update ensures that routers and/or domain name servers used in a network will not be overburdened as the invention continuously load-balances them as opposed to the prior art method of waiting until a router and/or domain name server is overburdened before load balancing occurs.

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The invention is set forth in claims of varying scopes of which Claim 1 is illustrative.

1. A method of dynamically updating dynamic host configuration protocol (DHCP) options stored on a computer system comprising the steps of:
setting up the options into a configuration file; and
periodically updating the options automatically. (Emphasis added.)

As stated above, the Examiner rejected the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Monroe et al. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Monroe et al. teach a system and method for a graphical user interface with buddy dialogs. According to Monroe et al., a graphical user interface (GUI) may be constructed to list objects in some sort of list control, and a user may be allowed to select one for editing by, for example, clicking on an icon, tag or edit button. Upon selecting an object for viewing or editing, the user may be presented with a separate dialog with the appropriate type of fields for that particular type of object. One specific kind of dialog box is referred to as a pop-up dialog, and is often or typically used to provide a user a way to edit the data values of many individual objects with different value formats.

A problem with the use of pop-up dialogs for configuring objects in a GUI is that the separate dialog boxes clutter the screen and one dialog box may hide valuable related information on the dialogs behind it. Thus, Monroe et al. propose the use of an improved GUI

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which allows a user to quickly view current settings of a collection of objects with using pop-up dialogs.

Accordingly, Monroe et al. teach a GUI with a buddy dialog. As a user selects an object from a list of displayed objects, a corresponding buddy dialog including data values which may be manipulated by the user is added to the property page and dynamically becomes part of the current dialog.

However, Monroe et al. do not teach the step of periodically updating DHCP options automatically as claimed. Consequently, Claims 1 - 4, 9 - 12, 17 - 20 and 25 - 28 are allowable of Monroe et al.

Regarding Claims 5 - 8, 13 - 16, 21 - 24 and 29 - 32, the Examiner did not show a prima facie 103 rejection. In accordance with MPEP 706.02(k), an Examiner may not reject claims in a Patent Application under 35 U.S.C. §103 if one of the references used and the Patent application are commonly owned and the reference is used as a 102(e) reference.

In this case, both Monroe et al., which is one of the applied references, and the present Application are owned by IBM. Monroe et al. is used as a 102(e) reference in rejecting the Claims under 103. Consequently, the teachings in Monroe et al. cannot be used in combination with teachings in other references to reject the claims in the present application.

Since one of the applied references is improperly used, Applicants submit that the Examiner failed to present a prima facie 103 rejection.

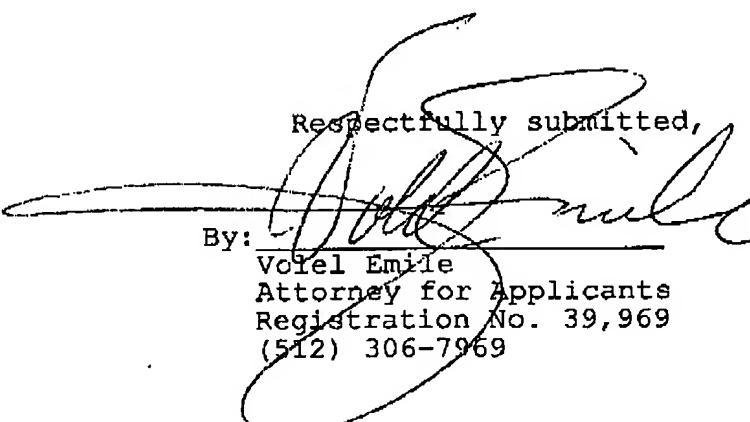
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Consequently, Applicants once more request reconsideration, allowance and passage to issue of the pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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